



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

Wildlife Division
PO Box 200701
Helena MT 59620-0701
June 10, 2013

Dear Interested Person:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is requesting public comment on proposed 2013 Elk Quotas Outside Biennial Quota Ranges, 2013 Furbearer Quotas, Expanded Ground Set Trap Setbacks on Specific Public Routes, 2013 Bison Quotas and 2013 Elk Harvest Prescriptions in Specific Hunting Districts. Additional information is below including deadlines for public comment.

2013 Elk Quotas Outside Biennial Quota Ranges - Proposed

Field surveys and analysis have identified one proposed quota change listed below that is outside the biennial quota range adopted in February 2012. All other changes are within the adopted biennial quota ranges, and are not presented here.

- 799-80: Increase antlerless B licenses from 200 to 400

2013 Furbearer Quotas - Proposed

Proposed changes to 2013 annual furbearer harvest quotas are below, with other species quotas proposed as unchanged from 2012.

- Increase the bobcat quota in Trapping District 1 from 250 to 275
- Reduce the bobcat quota in Trapping District 4 from 300 to 200
- Increase the swift fox quota in a portion of Trapping District 6 from 20 to 30

Due to uncertainty surrounding the wolverines status under the Endangered Species Act, FWP is currently recommending a quota of 0. FWP may seek to adjust this at the October 2013 FWP Commission meeting. If a quota adjustment is proposed in October, public comment will be taken. A final rule would be considered at the November FWP Commission meeting.

- Decrease the statewide wolverine quota from 5 to 0.

Expanded Ground Set Trap Setbacks on Specific Public Routes – Proposed

There is a proposed adoption of a 300 foot setback requirement for all ground sets on public land for identified and specific high recreational use routes listed below. The Commission expressed particular interest in public comments specifically addressing whether or not 300 feet is appropriate. NOTE these expanded setbacks are only for specific public land travel routes listed below.

- Require a 300 foot setback for ground sets on public land for specific high recreational use trails.

Identified High Use Trails for 300-Foot Ground Set Trap Setback

Trapping District 1

Blacktail Nordic Trail
Big Fork Nordic Trail
Round Meadow Nordic Trail
Whitefish Legacy Trail
Eureka Rails to Trails

Trapping District 3

Hyalite Area:

- a. Lick Cr./Wildhorse trail #452
- b. History Rock loops trail #424
- c. Blackmore loops trail #423
- d. Crescent Lake trail #213
- e. West shore #431
- f. E. Fork Road/Pallisade trail #433
- g. Grotto Falls trail #432
- h. Moser/Buckskin Road Loop
- i. Maxy Loop trail #62

Bozeman Face Trails:

- a. Bozeman Cr./Moser winter trail #850/851.
- b. South Cottonwood winter trail #852.

- c. Bear Canyon winter trail #848.

West Bridger's:

- a. "M" trails #s 538, 511, 512, and 513 in Sec 27 T1S, R6E.
- b. Sypes trail #531
- c. Middle Cottonwood trail #586
- d. Truman Gulch trail #535

Gallatin Canyon:

- a. Porcupine trail # 34
- b. Beehive basin winter trail #861.

Paradise Valley:

- a. Mill Creek trail #945
- b. Suce Creek trail #44

2013 Bison Quotas - Proposed

Montana's 2013 license quotas are proposed to remain the same at 44 either sex licenses (18 in HD 385 and 26 in HD 395); and 100 additional cow/calf licenses issued incrementally (54 in HD 385, 46 in HD 395) if conditions warrant. Of the 44 either sex licenses, 16 go to Montana Tribes as per state law. Additionally, four Tribes have asserted Treaty hunting rights and have stated intentions to hunt bison in the same areas outside Yellowstone National Park, but have not committed to any specific limit.

2013 Elk Harvest Prescriptions in Specific Hunting Districts – Proposed (Appendix I)

The FWP Commission adopted antlerless elk harvest prescriptions for the 2012 hunting season (Appendix I). Prescribed antlerless harvests were achieved in 6 hunting districts, portions of districts, or hunting district groups. Harvests were below prescription in the remaining 15 areas.

Adjusted prescriptions for the 2013 hunting season are now proposed for Commission adoption (Appendix I).

APPENDIX I

2013 ANTLERLESS ELK HARVEST PRESCRIPTIONS -- OUTSIDE MISSOURI BREAKS							
CURRENT			2012			2013	
HDs	POP OBJECTIVE (ELK OBSERVED)	5 YR AVE EST ANTLESS HVST PRIOR TO LAST HUNTING SEASON (2007 - 2011)	2012 POP SIZE (ELK OBSERVED)	2012 ANTLERLESS HVST PRESCRIPTION FOR LISTED HD(S) OR PORTION OF HD *	2012 EST ANTLESS HVST	2013 POP SIZE (ELK OBSERVED)	2013 ANTLERLESS HVST PRESCRIPTION FOR LISTED HD(S) OR PORTION OF HD *
401/403	280 - 420	36	474	50	35	558	50
450	75 - 100	15	403	50	15	328	50
411/511/530	640 - 920	176	2771	375	231	3,971	375
426	75	27	52	25	18	52(no svy)	25
412	240 - 360	62	919	150	55	858	150
447	560 - 840	111	1326	300	69	1,512	300
500/570	100	37	273	45	64	404	45
502/510 WEST OF HWY 310	50	7	88	15	35	81	16
520 SOUTH AND EAST OF WEST FK OF ROCK CREEK	200	17	230	35	8	289	38
575 EAST OF STILLWATER RIVER	150	35 (ENTIRE HD)	171	25	35(Entire HD)	195	42
575 WEST OF STILLWATER RIVER	150	SEE 575 EAST OF STILLWATER RIVER	535	80	35(Entire HD)	516	145
580 SOUTH OF SWEETGRASS CRK	225	173 (ENTIRE HD)	972	110	165 (Entire HD) (Estimate 58 antlerless elk from permit area 580 S. of Sweetgrass Crk)	1,033	110 (Permit area South of Sweetgrass Crk)
590/701 BULL MTNS	750	181 (ENTIRE HD)	1387	225	324 (Entire HD)	1,387	260
590/701 PINE RIDGE	300	SEE 590/701 BULL MTNS	435	45	324 (Entire HD)	407	48
702	500	30	846	50	105	300	50
704	SEE HD 702	75	SEE HD 702	115	94	1,027	115
705	SEE HD 702	21	SEE HD 702	45	23	415	45

2013 ANTLERLESS ELK HARVEST PRESCRIPTIONS -- MISSOURI BREAKS							
CURRENT			2012			2013	
HDs	POP OBJECTIVE (ELK OBSERVED)	5 YR AVE EST ANTLESS HVST PRIOR TO LAST HUNTING SEASON (2007 - 2011)	2012 POP SIZE (ELK OBSERVED)	2012 ANTLERLESS HVST PRESCRIPTION FOR LISTED HD(S) OR PORTION OF HD *	2012 EST ANTLESS HVST	2013 POP SIZE (ELK OBSERVED)	2013 ANTLERLESS HVST PRESCRIPTION FOR LISTED HD(S) OR PORTION OF HD *
410	2000 - 2300	195	3248	300	228	3,248(no svy)	300
417	350 - 400	62	569	85	60	733	85
620/621/622	1400 - 1650	445	1935	400	224	no survey	350
700	200 - 300	196	1382	205	394	1,383 (2012)	205
* HARVEST PRESCRIPTIONS FOR 2012 AND 2013 DEVELOPED WITH GUIDELINE TO REACH OBJECTIVE IN SIX YEARS. INITIAL ANNUAL PRESCRIPTIONS MAY BE REDUCED RELATIVE TO THIS 6-YEAR GUIDELINE TO REFLECT DIFFICULTY OF SOME HARVEST LOGISTICS.							

COMMENT PERIOD DEADLINES AND FINAL ADOPTION MEETINGS

The public comment period on the proposed 2013 Elk Quotas Outside Biennial Quota Ranges will extend through 5 p.m., Friday, July 5, 2013. Final adoption on this item will be made at the July 10, 2013 Commission meeting.

The public comment period on the proposed 2013 Furbearer Quotas, Expanded Ground Set Trap Setbacks on Specific Public Routes, 2013 Bison Quotas and 2013 Elk Harvest Prescriptions in Specific Hunting Districts will extend through 5 p.m., Monday, July 22, 2013. Final adoption on these items will be made at the August 8, 2013 Commission meeting.

NOTE there are different comment period deadlines for these proposals.

TO MAKE COMMENT

For further clarification, you may call the Wildlife Bureau office at 406-444-2612. To submit comments electronically, this letter with the imbedded links below can be found under “Opportunity for Public Comment” on the Hunting home page at the fwp.mt.gov website. Written comments can be sent to: FWP – Wildlife Bureau, Attn: Public Comment, POB 200701, Helena MT 59620-0701. NOTE there are different comment period deadlines for these proposals.

Imbedded Links to Submit Public Comment

NOTE there are different comment period deadlines for these proposals.

2013 Elk Quotas Outside Biennial Quota Ranges - Proposed

The deadline for public comment on this item is 5 p.m., Friday, July 5.

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2013proposedElkQuotas.html>

2013 Furbearer Quotas - Proposed

The deadline for public comment on this item is 5 p.m., Monday, July 22, 2013.

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2013proposedFurbearerQuotas.html>

Expanded Ground Set Trap Setbacks on Specific Public Routes – Proposed

The deadline for public comment on this item is 5 p.m., Monday, July 22, 2013.

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2013proposedFurbearerQuotas.html>

2013 Bison Quotas - Proposed

The deadline for public comment on this item is 5 p.m., Monday, July 22, 2013.

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2013proposedBisonQuotas.html>

2013 Elk Harvest Prescriptions in Specific Hunting Districts – Proposed (see attached)

The deadline for public comment on this item is 5 p.m., Monday, July 22, 2013.

<http://fwp.mt.gov/hunting/publicComments/2013proposedElkHarvestPrescriptions.html>